

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL LE US/LEBANESE COMMUNITIES

SUB: WISH TO GIVE US A MONUMENT FOR BICENTENNIAL

DEPT PASS TO MR. WILLIAM BLUE IN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

REF: JOVA-BLUE TELECON OF AUGUST 19

1. SUMMARY: ELEBANON'S AMBASSADOR TO MEXICO, JOSEPH NAFFAH, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR JOVA TOGETHER WITH HIS BROTHER, JORGE NAFFAH, AND FATHER STEVEN JOHN ON AUGUST 19 IN ORDER TO ASK JOVA'S ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE IN INITIATING DISCUSSIONS ON BUILDING A MONUMENT TO TEACHERS IN THE US DURING THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR. END SUMMARY.

2. AMB NAFFAH EXPLAINED THAT THE PROPOSED MONUMENT WOULD BE DEDICATED TO TEACHERS WHO HAD CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO HUMANITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. THE PROJECT WILL BE SUPPORTED BY DONATIONS OF LEBANESE COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH NOT AN OFFICIAL LEBANESE GOVERNMENT PROJECT, IT HAS THE GOV APPROVAL. AMB. NAFFAH REPORTED THAT HE ALREADY HAS \$40,000 IN PLEDGES FOR THE PROJECT AND THAT HE PROPOSES TO MAKE HIS BROTHER, JORGE NAFFAH, (A LEBANESE BUSINESSMAN IN MEXICO) OVER-ALL COORDINATOR FOR THE PROJECT AND FATHER SEVEN JOHN, OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, COORDINATOR IN THE US.

2. AMB NAFFAH SAID THAT THEY HOPED THAT THE USG WOULD BE
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ABLE TO DONATE SUITABLE GROUNDS FOR THE MONUMENT SOMEWHERE

CLOSE TO CONGRESS OR THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, WHICH HE NOTED HAS A FIGURE OF CADMUS, THE INVENTOR OF THE ALPHABET, ON ONE OF ITS DOORS -- NAFAH THOUGHT A LOCATION NEAR THE TRIBUTE TO CADMUS WOULD BE PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE.

3. AMB NAFFAH NOTED THAT ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE QUICKLY IF THE PROJECT WERE TO BE COMPLETED IN THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR. HE ADDED THAT HIS BROTHER AND FATHER JOHN WERE PREPARED TO GO TO WASHINGTON AND REQUESTED AMB JOVA'S ADVICE ON WHOM THEY SHOULD SEE. AMB JOVA TELEPHONED MR. WILLIAM BLUE OF THE BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION IN ORDER TO INFORM HIM ABOUT THIS OFFER. MR. BLUE SAID THAT HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO MEET WITH MR. JORGE NAFFAH AND FATHER JOHN THE WEEK OF AUGUST 25 IN ORDER TO DISCUSS THE MATTER.

4. MR. NAFFAH REPORTS THAT HE AND FATHER JOHN EXPECT TO ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON ON AUGUST 25 OR 26.

5. FYI: WHEN AMB JOVA DEMURRED AT GETTING DIRECTLY INVOLVED, AMB NAFFAH EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS FORCED TO SEEK AMB JOVA'S ASSISTANCE IN THIS MATTER BECAUSE LEBANON'S CURRENT AMB IN WASHINGTON WAS IN THE PROCESS OF DEPARTING POST AND THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN A REPLACEMENT WOULD BE NAMED AND THEREFORE HAD NO ONE TO TURN TO IN WASHINGTON, (WE MAY BE CONFUSED ON THIS) - AND, IN ANY CASE, THIS WAS AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE LEBANESE COMMUNITIES OF THE HEMISPHERE RATHER THAN ON THE GOL AND IT WAS PREFERABLE TO DEPOLITICIZE THE MATTER.

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